

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ACTION MEMORANDUM

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SS

COPIES TO:

M  
S/P

September 24, 1975

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TO : The Secretary

FROM: M - Lawrence S. Eagleburger  
S/P - Winston Lord

Organizing for "Multilateral" Diplomacy

Adopting A Multilateral Approach

In his paper, "Bilateral Trends and Multilateral Realities," Ambassador Moynihan points out that we are taking a beating in the UN and related international bodies as well as at important international conferences. He observes that this situation is not only harming our interests but sometimes makes nonsense of serious efforts to deal with important international issues. It also risks undermining Congressional and public support for the UN and for international conferences on acute world problems. This situation has resulted not only from the hostility of communist, nonaligned and less developed states but also from a simple failure to exert our diplomatic influence. Moynihan believes we can most effectively come to grips with this problem by giving our "multilateral" interests -- specifically voting patterns in the UN and other international bodies -- priority over our bilateral relations with those countries with which we have no significant bilateral interests. He has identified 64 such countries. Since these states provide the bulk of the votes against us in international bodies, we should launch a powerful campaign to change the way they are voting.

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### Problems of This Approach

While Moynihan's ultimate objective will have no opposition in the Department, strong disagreement will arise over our scope for exerting greater influence and the means of implementing the new approach, both in terms of our overseas diplomacy and of the institutional arrangements in the Department to carry it out. There are a number of weaknesses to the approach that will immediately be pointed out.

Countries where the bilateral relationship is insignificant are precisely the countries where we will have the least potential to carry out a policy of rewards and punishments. With no economic, political or security ties, there is little or nothing we can offer by way of inducement or threaten by way of punishment for the actions of those countries in the UN. Even in the case of countries where we have an AID program, such a policy lacks credibility. A country such as Mauritania, for instance, is completely dependent on Libyan support and largely indifferent to our threats or promises. In any case, an AID program can be cut off only once and, if stopped, would probably make that country more hostile to us. Some AID programs, as that with Mali, are for humanitarian purposes, such as to limit mass starvation, and to withdraw them would probably be impossible for domestic political reasons. Moreover, the US government is not usually institutionally able to initiate an AID program (as a reward to a compliant country) rapidly.

The countries at issue generally have little interest in international problems, poor communications and an inadequate civil service; consequently their UN ambassadors are largely on their own. Pressure in capitals could have little or no impact.

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A list of "multilateral" states will eventually become known; such a classification might be considered second-rate status and as a result reduce or destroy our influence there.

The major nonaligned states, and those with significant influence in international organizations, are not "multilateral" ones. As a result of the new approach we would find ourselves concentrating our pressure on the 64 weakest and least influential states in the world. Many of these countries are, moreover, apt to follow the lead of the major nonaligned states rather than succumb to our pressure.

#### Reasons to Go Ahead

These points are generally valid as far as they go, and they ought to caution us not to expect overnight miracles. But the arguments by no means diminish the cardinal fact that the US is not without prestige and influence in any country and that we have generally failed not only to bring pressure to bear but even to make our position on international issues known. Small influence or large, we must do what we can and there is a lot more we can do.

The fact that we have no evident means of exerting pressure on a nonaligned state, or may not even wish to retaliate against unfriendly behavior, is no reason not to inform the country that we deplore its voting practices and that we intend to take this into account at any time that country may seek our support on any bilateral or multilateral issues. In this connection, this new approach will force the Department to think through a precise catalog of potential rewards and punishments which can be resorted to if such were ever deemed useful.

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The situation the US faces, to reiterate, is a dangerous erosion of our diplomatic position in the world. This is most acutely evident in international forums, and we see Moynihan's approach essentially as a take-off point for launching a broad initiative to try to solve this broader problem. Our strategy must be a comprehensive one and will have to include Allies, friends, neutrals and nonaligned, both influential and not. The immediate aim of this approach, however, should be to focus on those nonaligned states where our bilateral interests are of minimal importance.

There is a great deal the Department can do right away. Using our computer capability, we should examine voting records (which we have already begun to do) as a basis for our efforts. We should inform all our ambassadors that issues in international forums are priority matters and that they and their staffs must be prepared to give to these issues whatever time and attention are necessary. We should then support our embassies with full and timely information and instructions. We should also raise these issues in Allied capitals and perhaps in multilateral forums such as NATO; we should also instruct embassies throughout the world to work with other friendly, especially NATO, embassies in our efforts.

From here on the problem will be more difficult. Producing a list of countries and giving appropriate ambassadors full and timely instructions will certainly help, but these steps will probably not elicit the institutional and psychological changes needed in the Department if the new approach is to be effectively implemented. We will face suspicion from the regional bureaus that their authority will be undermined and we will encounter the long-standing lack of authority of functional bureaus, in this case IO. There are various ways of restructuring the Department, from the creation of a new bureau for "multilateral" affairs to reliance on exhortation and periodic monitoring. (S/P has already done a useful study of this issue; this paper is attached at Tab 2.)

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### The Initial Step

We think it is best to proceed with a joint memorandum from us describing the proposal in general terms. We attach a draft memorandum for your approval (Tab 1). With your authorization, we would raise with the Assistant Secretaries, though only orally at this point, the proposed list of countries which is attached for your information at Tab 3. We think it would be unwise, given the danger of leaks, to include the list of countries with the memo.

As soon as we have an agreed list, we will have to develop with the bureaus more precise methods of implementing the concept -- determining what scope we have for greater diplomatic persuasion in each individual case, how we can improve our "persuasion" of countries not on the list (a factor that might otherwise be forgotten in the aftermath of our emphasis on the "multilateral" countries), and how we might work with friendly third countries (for example, Britain, France and Germany) and organizations (such as the EC).

At the same time, and perhaps of most importance, we will have to determine what changes will have to be made in the organization of the Department. While we do not yet see all of these clearly, it seems evident that IO will have to bear the brunt of the responsibility. We are inclined at the moment to think a new office under a strong director should be established there for "multilateral relations." It may even be advisable to establish a new Deputy Assistant Secretary in IO to take charge of this work. It would be understood that IO would also have a watching brief for other countries whose support in international forums is needed. Disagreements between IO and the geographic bureaus will have to be referred to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. We do not believe we should pull our "multilateral" countries out of the regional bureaus, though we may later on consider, as S/P suggests in the attached paper, the establishment of an office of "multilateral country" affairs within AF, NEA, ARA and EA.

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We ourselves cannot agree on one key issue: the degree of IO's control of "multilateral" countries. Eagleburger believes that IO should have complete authority on issues relating to multilateral forums though clearing instructions with regional bureaus, while regional bureaus would clear instructions on other matters with IO. He believes that short of having such authority, IO would be unable to assert the control necessary to achieve the objectives of the new approach. He knows that you have doubts about developing a "superstructure" to handle this approach. Perhaps they are justified, but he now feels strongly that anything short of a substantial shift of the organizational center of gravity will be doomed to failure. We have seen the building at work for too long. Lord is less certain that such drastic surgery is necessary. This, too, is an issue which will have to be thoroughly discussed with the bureaus and worked out as we go along. In any case we would prefer to wait to give you our final recommendations on all of these questions until after we have explored them thoroughly with the Assistant Secretaries.

Once the approach has been agreed on, we will have to work with the bureaus to draft a telegram to all missions to inform them of the new approach, how we intend to implement it and what the new additional responsibilities of ambassadors will be in "multilateral" countries.

Should this approach prove successful, it could serve as a pilot project for the Department in handling those other functional issues that are going to be major elements of foreign affairs in the coming decades.

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Recommendation:

That you approve the attached memorandum to IO  
and the regional bureaus

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

That you authorize us to develop a list of  
countries with IO and the regional bureaus

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Alternatively, that you meet with Buffum, Sisco  
and us to discuss this approach prior to our sending  
a memo to the bureaus

I should like to meet with you \_\_\_\_\_

No meeting is necessary \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments:

- Tab 1 - Proposed Memo From M & S/P to Assistant  
Secretaries of IO and the Regional Bureaus
- Tab 2 - Memo from S/P to M re "Organizing the  
Department for Multilateral Diplomacy"
- Tab 3 - Proposed List of "Multilateral" Countries

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